



VANGUARD CONFERENCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



2020





VANGUARD CONFERENCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



1) Overview

[Next City](#) seeks a host city for its Vanguard conference to take place in the spring of 2020. Vanguard is an annual gathering of rising urban leaders working to improve cities. This is a unique opportunity for a city to show off its urban development projects to the audience of a leading media organization, share innovations with the country's smartest emerging leaders, and to get ideas from rising young thinkers. Past conferences each include 40 leaders (www.nextcity.org/vanguard/members) selected by a competitive application process. They represent an interdisciplinary array of professions, backgrounds and regions. With the 2020 Vanguard, [Next City](#) looks for innovative partners who can help the organization take the conference to the next level. We are actively considering ideas for unique programmatic changes and/or partnerships and sponsorships that can expand the impact of the conference.

2) About Next City

Next City is a nonprofit news organization, founded in 2003, that believes in the power of journalism to amplify solutions, helping spread them from one city to the next city. More than 2 million influential change-makers visit Next City's website annually, another 150,000 follow its coverage on social media, and 40,000 subscribe to its newsletters. All are in search of solutions that infuse cities with greater economic, environmental, and social justice. Next City's journalism is supported directly by its readers, and by sponsors and foundations that care about issues such as poverty, discrimination, housing equity, greater access to capital, sustainable development, and more. When solutions are plentiful, so will our lives be in the city.



VANGUARD CONFERENCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

3) About Vanguard

Vanguard is our annual gathering of the best and brightest rising urban leaders, who work to improve cities across sectors such as urban planning, community development, government, entrepreneurship, design, transportation, sustainability, art and media. Each year, Next City announces an open call for Vanguard participants. The program is competitive; in 2018, we received more than 600 applications and selected 40 people whose bright ideas for cities, experience in the field, and ambition for the future all show great promise.

These 40 Vanguards, joined by Vanguard alumni, host city committee members, and Next City staff, gather for three days of presentations, workshops, neighborhood tours, and more to collectively learn and think about how to tackle challenges faced by our cities. This immersive conference includes site visits, panel discussions, walking and bike tours, and meetings with community leaders, all to get a street-level view of what's happening in the host city.

These experiences culminate in the event's centerpiece, the Big Idea Challenge. It is an opportunity for Vanguards to leave a meaningful mark in the host city. We work with each host committee to set a Big Idea



theme that resonates in the communities we visit. On such a compressed conference timeline, we don't presume (nor do we attempt) to swoop in and "solve" for challenges that cities may have struggled with for decades. Instead, each class brings expertise to and turns a fresh lens on such pressing issues, hoping that their proposals will lead to incremental and extendable progress. Vanguards brainstorm their Big Idea and make presentations during a public event.

Vanguard is a powerful opportunity for emerging and mid-career leaders who may be working in fields that don't typically offer opportunities for professional development and knowledge-sharing across

different disciplines and sectors. Next City is committed to ensuring invited Vanguards can participate, and, each year, the organization has covered the majority of conference costs for participants, including conference attendance, most meals and local travel. Although some scholarships are offered, Vanguards pay for travel to and from the conference.

Past Vanguard conferences have been held in Newark, NJ. (2019), New Orleans, LA (2018), Newcastle, AU (2017), Montreal, QC (2017), Houston, TX (2016), Reno, NV (2015), Chattanooga, TN (2014), Cleveland (2013), St. Louis (2012), Philadelphia (2010) and Washington DC (2009).



VANGUARD CONFERENCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

4) Scope of Services

Lead Sponsor(s): In selecting a city to host Vanguard, Next City seeks one or more Lead Sponsors who can provide financial support and collaborate with Next City to shape the conference. The Lead Sponsor will provide a direct contact for Next City to speak with on a bi-monthly basis throughout the planning of the conference. Lead sponsors will work with Next City to develop shared goals and issue areas/themes for the conference. In the past, sponsors have included a chamber of commerce, local foundation, economic development corporation, marketing and tourism bureau, or a combination of the above. Next City is also open to and interested in working with corporations and universities. Lead sponsors collaborate with Next City to select and invite local urban leaders representing diverse sectors and interests to serve on a conference Host Committee.

Host Committee: Members of the Host Committee, including representatives of sponsoring organizations, representatives of local government, and other stakeholders will work with Next City staff to chart the conference's programming, logistics, and theme. Critically, the committee curates local tours that showcase exciting initiatives and innovative projects, as well as areas of the city that demonstrate its challenges. The Host Committee will participate in the conference, engage and network with Vanguards at various receptions, and play a strategic role in executing the Big Idea Challenge.

Activities may include:

- Participate in regular conference calls;
- Connect Next City with local vendors and locations;
- Design and facilitate local tours;
- Serve as speakers, moderators and/or provide on-site support for events, where necessary;
- Promote attendance at any Vanguard events open to the public and coordinate local PR efforts;
- Promote conference to local government and involve mayor in various events, such as welcoming Vanguards and/or attending the Big Idea Challenge.

Budget: The cost of organizing and holding the conference depends on the location, lodging options and finalized agenda and activities. Next City and the Lead Sponsor(s) will work together to raise additional grants and corporate sponsorships that enhance the overall content. Some in-kind contributions, such as free event space, can offset hard costs. A key aspect of the Vanguard conference is that attendee's costs are kept to a minimum. To ensure the sustainability of this program, and to grow it in future years, Next City works with partners to develop a budget that enables the conference to earn money that is channeled back into the organization and builds capacity for future Vanguard conferences and other important programs. Next City asks U.S. cities to demonstrate a \$100,000 funding strategy, reflecting a mix of in-kind and cash support. Please share a funding strategy that reflects this commitment. An initial payment is required before Next City can begin collaboration on implementation of the funding strategy. For International cities, there are often additional expenses. For international cities, please draft a funding strategy that reflects an additional \$20,000 for visas, flights, and currency exchange.

Next City is responsible for the following:

- Next City staff coordinate all programming and logistics in advance and during the three-day conference, which will be open to selected Vanguard applicants, alumni, Host Committee members and other relevant community partners;
- Next City journalists will cover the host city with two to four stories in the weeks leading up to, during or after the conference;
- Next City will publish a special issue magazine that shares lessons learned from your city during the Vanguard Conference.
- The Lead Sponsor will receive free ad space on nextcity.org and within the special issue magazine;
- Next City and 40+ young leaders from around the country will provide additional coverage of your city on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram;
- See <http://nextcity.org/vanguard> for additional benefits of hosting the conference.





VANGUARD CONFERENCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

5) Proposal Requirements

To apply to become the 2020 host city, please submit a comprehensive proposal that includes the following information by July 31, 2019 to Sara Schuenemann via email (sara@nextcity.org).

Letter of Interest (3-page max)

The letter should include the following information:

- Brief description of the Lead Sponsor(s) and your vision for the Vanguard conference in your city;
- How your organization's activities align with the conference, and your anticipated outcomes;
- Suggested opportunities and challenges that would serve as the basis for the content development of the conference;
- One or more ideas for how to make the 2019 conference bigger, better or more impactful;
- Your funding commitment and strategy, including detail on secured and/or pledged funds, in addition to any other ideas for support;
- An overview of the strengths and resources of your organization(s) and Host Committee, specifically your experience with tours, event planning, hosting conferences, multi-stakeholder partnerships, or other relevant activities.

Proposed Host Committee (1 page max)

Please include the organization name and a brief description of each organization. Please include proposed host member names and titles, if possible. Host committees should be representative of the diverse communities in your city.

Supporting Material

Please send material on your city, including basic information and demographics, recent innovations, case studies, leadership profiles or challenges. These can be in any format, including written information, videos, or links.

6) Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

A) Financial Feasibility

The applicant has demonstrated a financial commitment and proposed fundraising strategy;

B) Innovation and Synergy

The host city has a dynamic civic ecosystem with leaders who are enthusiastic and flexible. There are clear, shared goals and interests and innovative ideas that will expand or enhance the existing platform;

C) Experience

Lead sponsors and Host Committee are committed to improving their city and have experience with the content areas, multi-faceted partnerships, developing conferences and/or similar events.

Questions? Call or Email

Sara Schuenemann
Events and Development Manager
(267) 239-0762
sara@nextcity.org
Next City, Inc.
1500 JFK, Suite 1220
Philadelphia, PA 19102

For more information
www.nextcity.org
www.nextcity.org/vanguard

